

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 IO-15 AF-10 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-10

RSC-01 AGR-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-02

H-03 INR-10 INT-08 L-03 LAB-06 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

AID-20 CIEP-02 SS-15 STR-08 TAR-02 TRSE-00 USIA-15

PRS-01 SPC-03 OMB-01 DRC-01 /235 W

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R 282130Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3024

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 3365

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EAGR, JM

SUBJ: LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE OF PROPOSED SUGAR QUOTA REDUCTION

REF: KINGSTON 3318

1. BOTH MORNING DAILY NEWSPAPERS CARRIED FRONT PAGE HEADLINE ARTICLES ON PROPOSED SUGAR QUOTA REDUCTION. DAILY GLEANER ARTICLE GAVE ISSUE MORE RESTRAINED AND FULLER TREATMENT COMPARED TO DAILY NEWS SHORTER TWO COLUMN NATIONALISTIC APPROACH. BOTH ARTICLES FOCUSED ON DISASTROUS ECONOMIC EFFECT ON SUGAR INDUSTRY GIVING APPROXIMATELY SAME REASONS FOR SHORT FALL AS INDICATED IN DEMARCHE BY CARICOM AMBASSADORS. BOTH ARTICLES ALSO INDICATED CARIBBEAN CAPACITY TO MEET FUTURE QUOTA COMMITMENTS INCLUDING PROJECTED TARGET PRODUCTION OF 920,000 TONS IN 1974, AND 1.1 MILLION TONS BY 1978. GLEANER ARTICLE ALSO REPORTED THAT STATE DEPARTMENT WAS "SYMPATHETIC" BUT AGRICULTURE "MAINTAINS ITS POSITION THAT IT MUST CARRY OUT THE LAW".

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2. NEW SLANT TO GOJ ANALYSIS PROVIDED IN FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND TOURISM PJ PATTERSON "WHAT IS SURPRISING IS THE INSISTANCE OF THE U.S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ON THE STRICT LEGAL INTERPRETATION BEING APPLIED TO THE WEST INDIES QUOTA, AS THERE HAVE BEEN SIMILAR DEROGATIONS IN THE PAST BY OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE NOT ATTRACTED THE SEVERE PENALTIES PROPOSED FOR THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN. IN THE PAST THE US GOVERNMENT HAS APPROACHED THE SUGAR ACT ON THE BASIS OF SELECTIVE NON-ENFORCEMENT, LARGELY TO AVOID DIPLOMATIC CONSEQUENCES AND WE BELIEVE THE PRESENT SITUATION SHOULD BE APPROACHED IN A SIMILAR FASHION."

3. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT FORCES WITHIN THE JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT PREPARED TO FORCE THE GOJ TO FISH OR CUT BAIT WITH RESPECT TO ITS CONFLICTING SUGAR COMMITMENT TO THE UK AND THE US. THESE ELEMENTS ARE PRESSING STRONGLY FOR INCREASED SHIPMENT TO THE US IN ORDER TO RETAIN ACCESS TO THIS MORE PROFITABLE MARKET EVEN AT THE ESPENSE OF SHORTING THE UK. PRECIPITANT ACTION IN APPLYING THE LAW TO REDUCE THE QUOTA WOULD NOT ONLY UNDERCUT THE ELEMENTS SEEKING RATIONALIZATION IN GOJ SUGAR POLICIES BUT WOULD HAVE A STRONGLY ADVERS IMPACT ON US/JAMAICAN RELATIONS, ALREADY STRAINED BY THE DEROULET AFFAIR AND THE VISA PROBLEM. WE URGE THAT APPLICATION OF THE LAW BE SUSPENDED AT LEAST TEMPORARILY PENDING DISCUSSIONS AMONG CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES ON SUGAR POLICY AND RESOLUTION OF THE ARGUMENT GOING ON IN THE GOJ.
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